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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2009

In Today's Papers

North Korea Defies the World Again (Sabah)
Media outlets note the global shock that North Korea's nuclear missile test caused yesterday. Mainstream Vatan headlines, "He (Kim Jong Il) Doesn't Take the World Seriously," as "despite international pressure, he tested and exploded a nuclear bomb the size of the bomb that hit Hiroshima." Mainstream Haberturk reports in "Kim's Bomb Explodes," that "the bomb rocked the region with a 4.7 magnitude earthquake as the test also struck an earthquake in the world's reactions to the test." Mainstream Hurriyet headlines, "An Atomic Surprise," and reports, "A surprise came from North Korea as the Obama administration is working to dissuade Iran from its nuclear program." Mainstream Milliyet headlines, "A Nuclear Earthquake," and reports, "Alarms rang out across the world yesterday as North Korea launched a nuclear test," and "informed the U.S. one hour before the test." Liberal Radikal writes in "Pyongyang's Nuclear Gamble," that, "South Korea, Japan, and the entire international community is on alert," and, "Obama calls for action." Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines, "North Korea's Second Nuclear Test Incites The World," and the paper reports, "Several countries, with the U.S. in the lead, condemned the test." Leftist Taraf headlines, "The Whole World Set Their Eyes on North Korea." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak notes, "U.S. President Barack Obama called the test 'an act of defiance.'" NTV reports "North Korea is not heeding the world's condemnation" as "North Korea fired more test missiles today."

Sami Kohen writes in Milliyet in "The World's Nuclear Impasse," that "The international community is facing an impasse given North Korea's nuclear test. The Kim Jong-Il regime apparently considers nuclear weapons as an insurance to its power as well as its security, and is willing to pursue this approach at all costs. The international community has tried both negotiations and sanctions, but neither worked. This time, once again, the UNSC may issue a resolution and North Korea will once again ignore it. Because all possible methods have been used so far and there are not many options left, the world is facing an impasse and North Korea is moving toward joining the Atomic Club." Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in mainstream Hurriyet, "North Korea, despite all the international

efforts, is moving toward being a nuclear power. And, this recent development will encourage Iran even more than before. At this point, Israel's concern about Iran's nuclear capacity is justifiable. Israel was arguing that Iran continued to work toward its nuclear ambitions while pretending to be a part of nuclear talks. It looks like North Korea was doing the same."

Editorial Commentary on North Korea

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Davutoglu Visits Baku

Media outlets report Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, in Baku for a

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two-day official visit, will discuss bilateral issues relations and regional cooperation. Mainstream Hurriyet reported Monday FM Ahmet Davutoglu as saying late Sunday that the OSCE Minsk Group has failed to make progress toward a solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. Davutoglu added it was hard to disagree with Azerbaijani President Aliyev, who recently criticized the performance of the Minsk Group. "The records show there has been no progress. It's time to revive this process. Turkey will continue its efforts," Davutoglu said. Davutoglu also said Aliyev and Armenian President Sargsyan would meet on numerous occasions over the coming period. Davutoglu went to Baku on Monday to meet Aliyev and Azerbaijani FM Elmar Mammadyarov.

'Landmines on Turkey-Syria-Iraq Border' Controversy Grows

Media outlets report the parliament will continue this week debating a controversial draft bill on the "demining" of Turkey's border areas with Syria. The ruling AKP government wants the sweeping to be done by private companies whereas opposition CHP and MHP want the Turkish military to handle it. Over the weekend, opposition parties spoke against the "lease" of the swept areas "for 44 years" to the company that removes the landmines. MHP deputy group chief Oktay Vural said yesterday his party was not against the removal of landmines, but only opposed the lease of the territories to foreigners. Vural said the swept lands should be given to local people who are in need.

Military spokesman General Metin Gurak said last week the vast border area could not be cleared with the Turkish military's equipment alone, adding modern mine clearance equipment as well as specially trained personnel was needed. Gurak said NATO's Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) could be considered for the sweep. Government officials say landslides and floods invalidated the old maps showing landmine locations -- one of the reasons why the reason the military cannot do the job. Last week, Prime Minister Erdogan told deputies that the government was working in coordination with the TGS and said a bidding process for the sweep would begin only after the law was passed by the parliament. The "landmine zone" begins in Hatay in the south and extends through Kilis, Gaziantep, Sanliurfa and Mardin before ending at Sirnak in the mainly Kurdish southeast. The 178.5 square-kilometer area stretches for 510 km in length, and is estimated to have around 600,000 landmines. Turkey is obligated to have all landmines cleared by 2014, according to a 1993 international accord signed in Ottawa.

Erdogan's Remarks on 'Ethnic Identities' Draw Support, Criticism
Media outlets report minorities and several communities in Turkey "reacted positively" to PM Erdogan, who has stated over the weekend "In the past, people who come from different ethnic identities were banished from Turkey; this had been a fascistic attitude." Mainstream Hurriyet reports Silvyo Ovadya, the head of the Jewish community in Turkey, lauded Erdogan for "telling the truth." The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate spokesman Dositheos Anagnostopoulos said Erdogan's had been a "brave approach," but that "concrete steps" should follow it. Hurriyet reports Greek dailies took Erdogan's remarks to their headlines, some saying the Turkish PM's words were "historic confessions and self-criticism."

Energy Minister Yildiz to Travel to Iraq, the US
Mainstream Sabah report Energy Minister Taner Yildiz will travel Wednesday to Baghdad to come together with the electricity ministers from Iran, Iraq and Syria. In the "summit meeting," Yildiz will discuss with the ministers from Turkey's neighbors "cooperation" in oil, natural gas and electricity issues. Following his visit to Iraq, Yildiz is expected to travel to the US, according to Sabah.

Football Diplomacy and Diplomatic Inroads Between the U.S. and Iran

Mainstream Milliyet headlines, "From Ahmadinejad to Obama: Come, Let's Discuss," and reports, "Yesterday Iranian President

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Ahmadinejad invited President Obama to discuss the world's problems." In "Let's Discuss the World with Obama," mainstream Haberturk reports, "Ahmadinejad said he is ready to take up the world's problems with Obama." Meanwhile, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "Football Diplomacy with Iran," that "Iran has accepted the U.S. Soccer Federations offer for a 'friendship match'" to take place at Tehran's Azadi Stadium, which holds up to 100,000 people.

Editorial Commentary on Turkey/IMF

Gungor Uras wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "It seems the government is very reluctant to conclude a deal with the IMF and is doing its best with time gaining tactics. Can Turkey really survive without the IMF credits? The answer can be positive if the government implements a new policy based on restructuring economy and measures for sustainable deficit."

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "The government has not yet concluded an agreement with the IMF but working on new projects to revitalize economy. All of these projects are based on lifting up economic data by promoting domestic demand. Obviously extra funding is necessary to implement such projects. If IMF is not going to be source, who is going to be? The minister in charge of economy needs to address this dilemma."

Aydin Ayaydin wrote in mainstream Vatan: "If the AKP government makes a deal with IMF, it will have to implement fiscal discipline and belt-tightening measures which will not be a helpful way to be popular at the upcoming general elections. It seems the government tends to gain time without IMF until after the elections. Needless to say, the consequences in post-elections period will be more severe than before."

Nazif Gurdogan wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak (5/24): "The global economic crisis has changed the way of thinking about economic models. During this crisis, supply and demand trend has shifted from superficial needs to genuine needs. Correct planning at the right time offers a good thing to turn crisis into opportunities."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Prime Minister Erdogan will travel to Greece on June 20 to attend the opening of the new Acropolis Museum. On June 25, Erdogan will visit Albania.

- Turkey's special Iraq envoy Murat Ozcelik has been posted to Baghdad as Turkey's new ambassador in Iraq.
- On Tuesday, President Abdullah Gul will travel to Kyrgyzstan for a two day official visit.
- On Wednesday, opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal will kick off a tour of the mainly Kurdish southeastern provinces.
- Abdullatif Sener, a former cabinet minister in the first AKP government, founded yesterday a new political party - "Turkey Party." Sener said his party would be a "democratic and centrist" one.
- On Tuesday, Prime Minister Erdogan and TGS Chief General Basbug will observe the Turkish military's scheduled war games, the Efes 2009 military exercises in Izmir.

World

- Xavier Bertrand, Secretary General of the French ruling party UMP,

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says they were against the EU accession of Turkey in the short, medium and long term.

- Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias says Turkey cannot join the EU as long as Turkey's occupation of Cyprus continues.
- Cem Ozdemir, the co-chair of the German Green Party, voiced confidence that visa requirements for Turkish visitors would be removed completely.
- The trial of the DHKP-C (Dev-Sol) militants starts in the Belgian Court of Appeals.
- International rating companies say a deal with the IMF would have no impact on Turkey's credit rating.
- The French branch of the Church of Scientology is about to go on trial in Paris to face charges of "organized fraud."

JEFFREY